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UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

WASHINGTON

July 20, 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Brig. General Edward G. Lansdale
Assistant to the Secretary of Defense
(Special Operations)
The Pentagon

The following information is supplied for inclusion in your report on Phase I, Operation Mongoose.

1. Our objectives during this period were: (1) to utilize all media [REDACTED]

by demonstrating its failure to satisfy the aspirations of the people, by its totalitarian nature and by its subservience to Sino/Soviet policy dictates, and (2) to utilize short wave radio directed at Cuba in order to maintain overt communications with the Cuban people and to assist in undermining their support for and confidence in their Castro/Communist rulers.

Specific tasks assigned to USIA within the general framework of the two principal objectives included those of exploiting Castro defectors and children refugees, examining and reporting on medium wave broadcast [REDACTED]

2. Accomplishments during Phase I.

During this phase reporting from our field posts and limited public opinion surveys indicate a continuing decline of Castro's public prestige among the general public in Latin America. However, this does not mean that we feel there is any general repudiation of Castro and, much less, that there is any strong upsurge in public support for the need for action against Castro. The present general attitude might best be described as "negatively apathetic." (A subsequent memorandum from USIA indicates that these surveys are based on broad samplings in seven Latin American countries. The usual scientific sampling technique was applied, as in the Dominican Republic where 814 persons were contacted.)

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We assigned a full-time representative to Opa Locka. His duties have been to identify and develop the most exploitable material from the refugees who go through that center. He has also made a continuing appraisal of VOA programing and reception.

The principal themes upon which we concentrated during this phase were:

A. Economic. Our heaviest continuing output has concentrated on the deteriorating economic situation and the consequent failure of the Castro regime to satisfy the needs of the Cuban people. Media content has relied heavily on our Miami office which has supplied a constant flow of interviews with arriving refugees. Particular emphasis has been placed on the bungling management by the Cuban Communists. Parallels with agricultural failures in the Soviet Union and famine conditions in Red China have also been utilized in order to pin Cuban failures on the Communist system. The power struggle between Castro and the old line Communists has also been treated, not as an ideological struggle, but rather as another cause of economic chaos and inefficiency in running the government.

B. Refugees. The refugee situation received heavy play by our Press Service and the Voice of America. Several interviews per week were used, stressing chaotic economic conditions, rising unemployment and food shortages. Special attention was given to the fact that the refugee groups now include growing numbers of negroes and persons from the lower income groups -- people on whom Castro had depended for his initial support.

C. Labor. We have stressed in our general media output the repression of the labor movement under the Castro regime with specific emphasis on lower pay, longer hours and growing unemployment in Cuba. On this theme we have been particularly successful in Venezuela where the Confederation of Venezuelan Workers (COV) is distributing our materials on the Cuban situation.

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D. Students & Intellectuals. This has been the most difficult target group to work on. Paradoxically, this group appears to be the least susceptible to logical and reasoned appeal. The Castro problem is so highly charged emotionally that no broad avenue of approach has yet been found. The themes which have been helpful in building a negative attitude in the general public -- revulsion at mass executions, immediate, concrete economic hardships, attacks on the Church and the social structure, regimentation of labor and other infringements of individual liberties -- have not proved particularly effective with this group. Castro's Messianic appeal to this group elicits an emotional response which so far has proven most difficult to overcome. Nevertheless, we are working very hard on developing materials capitalizing on his takeover of the university and attacks on individual liberties.

E. Media products developed in support of the Operation (in addition to the usual daily and weekly output in our normal operations) have included:

(1) Books. (Spanish)

- (a) Lequerica Velez - 600 dias con Fidel (1,000 copies)

An account of the Castro regime as seen by the author during his two years as Colombian Ambassador in Havana.

- (b) Baeza Flores - Las Cadinias vienen de lejos (20,000 copies)

An account of the inner workings of the Castro regime and its takeover by the Communists by a Chilean journalist who worked closely with Castro in the early days of the Revolution and who later escaped to Mexico.

- (c) Gilbert - El Infidel Castro (Castro l'Infidele) (6,000 copies)

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A French newsman's very unfavorable commentary on Castro's Cuba as he saw it in a 1961 visit.

- (d) James - Cuba, 1st Soviet Satellite in America
(6,000 copies) - (A Portuguese edition is now under way)

(2) In English we also distributed widely in Latin America both the James book (d above) and Theodore Draper's Castro's Revolution.

Cartoon Books. During the period we have had in production and/or distribution throughout Latin America a total of 5 million copies of the following six cartoon books:

- La Estafa - (Castro's takeover of the universities)
- La Punalada - (Castro's attack on the Church)
- Los Secuestradores - (Brainwashing of children)
- La Mordaza - (Takeover of the press and radio)
- El Despertar - (Betrayal of the land reform)
- La Traicion - (Takeover of the labor movement)

Films. The Agency produced one film on Cuba during this period:

La Tierra Prometida (10 minute animated on economic failure in Cuba) - Shown in commercial theatres throughout Latin America, also by mobile film units.

Two more similar films are now in production. Exact titles are not yet available but they will cover Castro mistreatment of organized labor and children.

- We also supplied newsreel clips on Cuban refugees,
- Ecuador's break with Cuba, the COSAC Meeting, and the Punta del Este MFM.

Radio.

- (a) Broadcasts to Cuba:

Opa Locka reports indicate listenership to be high at least among this group. Short wave is, of course, always somewhat limited as we indicated in our detailed memoranda on this subject. Nevertheless, it does give us a direct channel to certain sectors of Cuban society.

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Of 1370 refugees interviewed at Opa Locka in the past two months, 625 said they listened to the Voice of America and were able to identify at least one program on the Voice.

Three of the daily nine hours of Spanish broadcast by the VOA are aimed directly at Cuba. Fourteen different programs make up this package. These include news, commentary, dramatic, sports, Cuban news, agricultural, and historical features, all carrying some freight for our objectives.

(b) Broadcasts to Latin America. For radio coverage of the rest of Latin America, we depend to some extent on local retransmission of VOA shortwave feeds and, principally, on local transmission of VOA taped shows, and shows produced by our field posts. Our placement record is good and we have access to the large majority of radio listeners in the area by these means. News and commentary shows together with serialized anti-Castro and anti-Communist dramatizations are our best outlet in this medium.

Listenership surveys show our soap opera, La Garra Escondida (The Hidden Claw) to have a very high rating throughout the area. Pitched to the urban working class audience, the program is built around family life in a suburban area and the villain of all episodes is the Communist Party or Fidelista front groups.

TV. We have acquired the rights for the Armstrong Circle Theatre show - Anatomy of a Broken Promise - which is now in Spanish and Portuguese production and should be on the air throughout the area in from 30 to 60 days.

— We have also acquired the rights to a half-hour West German newsreel on Cuba which is now being put into Spanish and will be circulating in a very short time.

Cuban material has also been included regularly on our fifteen minute show - Panorama Panamericano - shown weekly to 15 million people throughout the area.

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Medium Wave Broadcast

Our evaluations of medium wave broadcasting [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] were presented to the special groups
with negative recommendations for strategic, overt
U. S. Government utilization. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

3. Potential for psychological operations.

In all psychological planning special attention should be given to avoiding, insofar as is practical, any indications which might be construed as plans to return to the status quo ante. All information output should be pointed toward reassuring the populace that the anti-Castro movement is designed to carry forward programs supporting the social and economic aspirations of the Cuban people.

Particular attention should be given to the tactical utilization of medium wave radio prior to and during any operations. Short wave radio broadcasting would also be stepped up in support of operations. Propaganda leaflets should also receive a high priority.

Immediate food distribution and medical attention programs should also be given priority because of their psychological value in enlisting local populous support for the liberating forces.

5. We do not consider items a and d feasible at this time and therefore limit our presentation to b and c.

Factors worth consideration in deciding on a future course: -

b. Exert all possible diplomatic, economic, psychological, and other pressures to overthrow the Castro-Communist regime without overt U. S. military commitment.

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1. Positive factors supporting this course of action would include:

i. This would be a Cuban operation directed for and by Cubans, thus making for possibly wider acceptance from the bulk of the Cuban people.

ii. There would be minimum static at the UN and OAS on "intervention" charges.

iii. There would be a minimum propaganda base for exploitation of ever-present anti-Yankee sentiment in the rest of Latin America.

iv. This operation would have a psychological advantage in forcing the various Cuban anti-Castro factions to come to a working agreement with each other rather than separate arrangements with CIA. This should provide a better psychological base for long-range political development in a free Cuba.

v. This option would provide the new GDC with a better psychological base for developing policies more responsive to the demands and aspirations of the Cuban people. (i. e., operations with overt GUS support would probably result in strong pressures from U.S. business firms and Bastistianos for significant action pointing towards a return to the status quo ante.

2. Negative factors include:

i. Failure of this operation due to U.S. nonintervention would have disastrous effects on the morale of all opposition groups in and out of Cuba.

ii. Failure would also have very negative effects on U.S. prestige and stature in the hemisphere and probably damage our position of power in regional and other international organizations.

iii. Less chance of strong moral and material support from U.S. business interests, vital to rebuilding process.

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iv. Less chance of effective U. S. guidance of information media during and immediately after landings.

v. Much more difficult to control information media support in time and space after landings.

c. Commit U. S. to help Cubans overthrow the Castro-Communist regime, with a step-by-step phasing to ensure success, including the use of U. S. military force if required at the end.

1. Positive factors.

i. With a better chance of a short struggle and a clean-cut victory, psychological operations would be more easily handled and controlled.

ii. The U. S. power position and prestige in Latin America and probably the rest of the world would be greatly enhanced.

iii. U. S. guidance and direction of media content during and immediately after the operations would be facilitated.

iv. These operations would serve as a strong warning to leftist, non-communist parties in Latin America that the U. S. will not tolerate alliances with Communists. This could be effective in Bolivia, Chile and Colombia.

2. Negative factors.

i. Much more difficult to justify to world opinion in terms of traditional U. S. policy of nonintervention and respect for the rule of law.

ii. There would be a much higher noise level on intervention at the UN and OAS.

iii. It would provide the Sino-Soviets a good propaganda base for possible operations in Berlin, Laos, Quemoy, etc.

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iv. It would provide a strong propaganda base for indigenous Communist group actions against pro-U. S. , anti-Castro governments in neighboring countries (Colombia, Venezuela, Guatemala, Ecuador).

v. Greater difficulty in evolving a post-overthrow political ideology suitable to all elements involved.
(i. e. U. S. leadership during the operation will be strongest factor holding diverse groups together and will thus probably have to combine after overthrow.

vi. Possibility of remaining guerrilla-type operations acting on the propaganda base of anti-foreign invaders.

(signed)

Donald M. Wilson
Deputy Director

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